

CHAPTER 127
COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINERS
[Prior to 7/29/87, Health Department [470] Ch 127]

641—127.1(331) Types of death under the jurisdiction of the county medical examiner.

127.1(1) *From violence.* Any accident, suicide or homicide resulting from physical, mechanical, chemical, electrical, thermal or related means. A medical examiner's investigation and report is required irrespective of the period of survival following injury and medical attendance at the time of injury or during a period of survival.

127.1(2) *Suddenly, when in apparent health.* This term should be reserved for the following situations:

- a. Apparently instantaneous death without obvious cause.
- b. Death during or following an unexplained syncope or coma.
- c. Death during an unexplained, acute, or rapidly fatal illness.

127.1(3) *When unattended by a physician during the period of 36 hours immediately preceding death.* This term should be reserved for the following situations:

- a. Found dead without obvious or probable cause.
- b. Unattended by a physician during the terminal illness, particularly if such illness appears unrelated to a disease previously diagnosed and under treatment.
- c. Accordingly, the medical examiner need not investigate or report a death resulting from or due to a terminal illness which had been diagnosed and where the patient was under treatment by a licensed physician, even though the physician had not seen the patient within the 36 hours preceding death. In these cases if the physician has not seen the patient within 20 days prior to death, then the cases should be referred to the medical examiner.

d. Fetal death (stillbirth) unattended by a physician. A fetal death (stillbirth) is a fetus born dead after reaching the twentieth week of gestation.

127.1(4) *As a result of, or following, an abortion.* All known deaths as a result of or following an abortion shall be reported to the county medical examiner by all parties, physicians and hospitals knowing the circumstances of such deaths.

127.1(5) *While in custody of the law.* Any death involving a person while in custody of the law or confined to any prison for any cause.

127.1(6) *In an accident in a gypsum or coal mine.* All deaths occurring in a gypsum or coal mine automatically become medical examiner's cases.

127.1(7) *In a suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner.* Any death suspected having resulted from accident, suicide, or homicide, or any death not otherwise defined.

127.1(8) *From a disease which might constitute a threat to public health.* Any such death investigated by the medical examiner shall be reported to the local health authority.

641—127.2(331) Death certificates. The certificate of death shall be executed on the standard form and the certification of death shall be completed in full by the medical examiner and given to the funeral director to whom the body is released for burial arrangements. It is, however, the duty of the funeral director in charge of the remains to complete the particulars of the certificate and file the certificate with the local registrar in the county wherein death occurred. A death certificate must be filed before a burial or transit permit will be issued and prior to disposal of the body.

641—127.3(331) Cremation. Permit must be issued by county medical examiner in the county where the death occurred.

641—127.4(331) Taking charge of body.

127.4(1) The medical examiner, upon notification of death, shall view the body.

127.4(2) In all cases coming under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner, the decedent shall not be moved from the place of death without the consent of the medical examiner.

127.4(3) The medical examiner may, after investigation and determination that the case is not under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner, refer the case to the attending physician.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 331.801 to 331.805, 144.28, and 144.31.

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